

Some questions about Project L.E.A.D.

Why fifth-graders?

Educators believe that the fifth-grade level represents a turning point for elementary school students. Children at this age begin to think more about the society around them, their place within that society, and the laws, customs and traditions that shape how society functions. Programs for fifth-graders that promote nonviolent values, positive attitudes, and interpersonal skills are crucial for preventing juvenile delinquency.

Why law-related education?

Studies show that students exposed to law-related education programs are less likely to engage in delinquent behavior. These students also develop more positive attitudes toward schoolwork, open-minded attitudes about cultural differences, and negative attitudes toward wayward and disruptive peers.

Why prosecutors in the classroom?

"I look at it as a preventive measure. The more kids we have contact with in the classroom, the fewer we'll have contact with in court. We're reaching them before there is an adversarial relationship."

— Deputy District Attorney Michael Carter

"The kids who are in this program are basically good kids who have few positive community role models. They are exposed on a day-to-day basis to drug and alcohol abuse and gang activity. . . . Project L.E.A.D. seeks to deal with the issue of personal responsibility. It shows students that by working hard and staying in school, anything is possible."

— Deputy District Attorney Chuck Mandel

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"I am a reading/language arts teacher and I found this experience to be both illuminating and powerful for me, a 30-year-old. I can't imagine how great an impact this program must have had on my students. This whole experience has been incredibly constructive and positive. In short . . . THANK YOU!"

— Geoff Ramirez, teacher
John Marshall Middle School

"The best thing about Project L.E.A.D. is that you can make some positive image changes in the way the kids see law enforcement; you have a chance to dispel some rumors as to what law enforcement is about in a very positive environment."

— Ken Bell, Senior Investigator

"This program is letting kids know that they can be attorneys, they can be doctors, that it's possible for them to do these things. A lot of them don't get that kind of encouragement at home."

— Michael Bullotta
Assistant United States Attorney

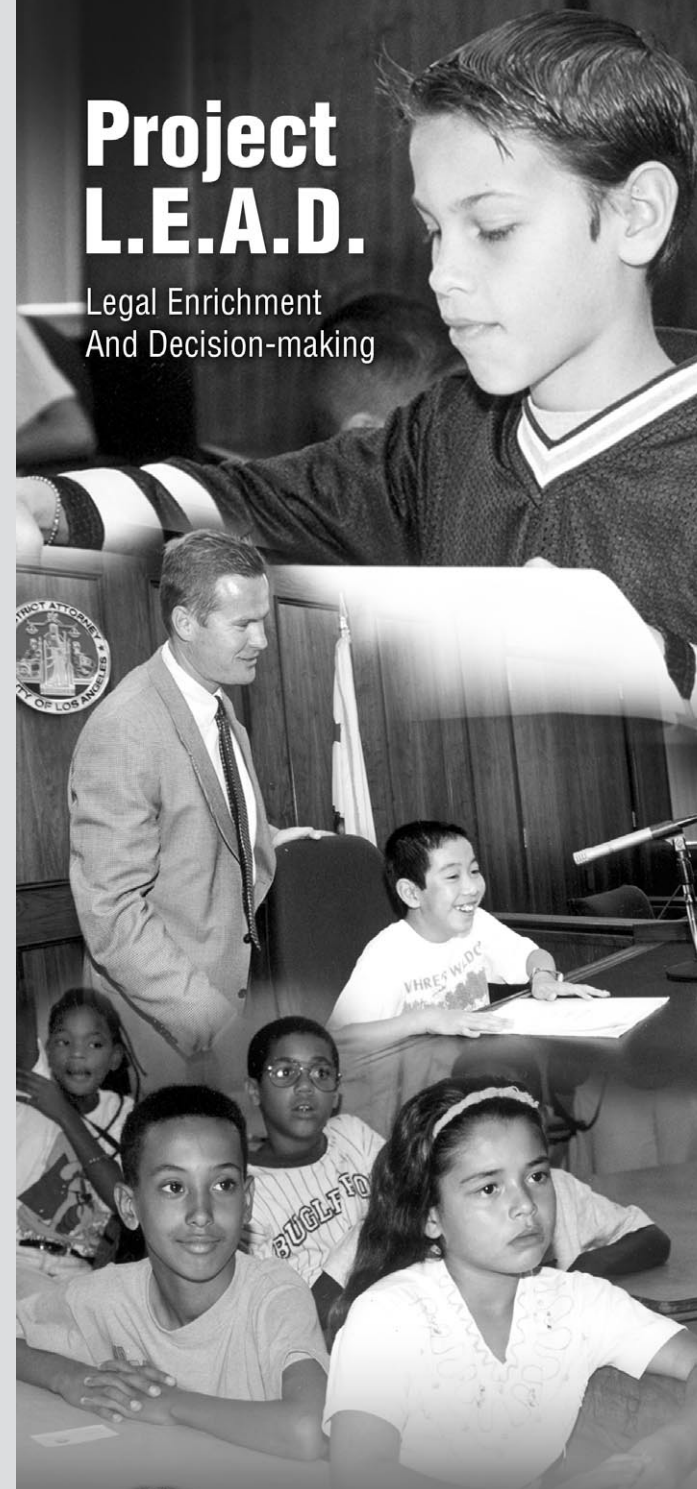
"I want to thank you for letting us have Project L.E.A.D. I learned that you have to think about your choices before you do something wrong."

— A fifth-grade student

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Project L.E.A.D.

Legal Enrichment
And Decision-making



**Los Angeles County
District Attorney's Office**



It is no secret that too many young people first become acquainted with the justice system as delinquents. That's too late. With a more fundamental knowledge of right and wrong, the law and the consequences of breaking it, more young people will be equipped to make the right decisions in life. That's why Deputy District Attorneys and District Attorney Investigators each year volunteer hundreds of hours of their time to Project L.E.A.D. (Legal Enrichment And Decision-making).

Through Project L.E.A.D., prosecutors, investigators and other professionals in the District Attorney's Office teach fifth-graders about the dangers and legal consequences of involvement in gangs, illicit drug use, and other crime. The program helps at-risk students learn the importance of making good choices, including staying in school.

More than 17,000 students from throughout Los Angeles County have participated in Project L.E.A.D. The program's curriculum recently was updated and improved to make it even more effective. The goal is simple – teach kids that the choices they make today can affect their lives forever.

S. L. Cooley
Steve Cooley
District Attorney
Los Angeles County

Project L.E.A.D.

In 1993, the Los Angeles County District Attorney's Office implemented Project L.E.A.D., a 20-week, law-related curriculum targeting fifth-graders. Through this program, volunteer Deputy District Attorneys, District Attorney Investigators, Assistant United States Attorneys, law clerks, and paralegals impart to students the knowledge and skills which help them recognize the legal and social consequences of criminal behavior. The goal of the program is to instill positive values and encourage students to stay in school to develop the life-enhancing skills needed to grow into productive members of the community.

■ The lessons consist of instruction on law and an analytical approach to solving hypotheticals involving drug use, gang involvement, theft, hate crimes, driving under the influence, truancy, graffiti, and other issues.

■ The curriculum also focuses on self-esteem, conflict resolution, and peer pressure.

■ The program is strengthened by presentations from law enforcement officers and judges – even drug-sniffing dogs – as well as field trips to Los Padriños Juvenile Hall, the Museum of Tolerance, and a local courthouse.

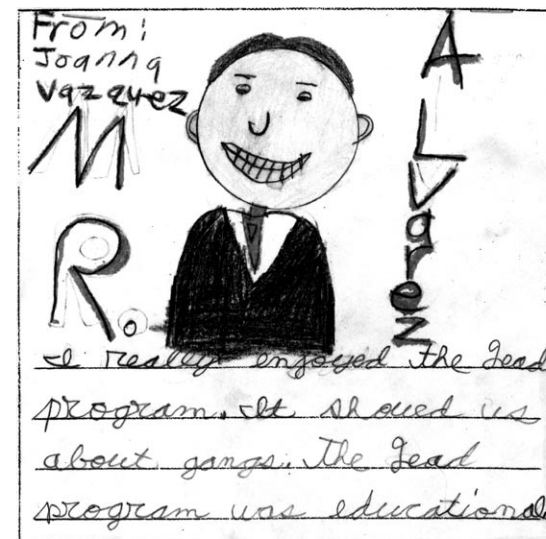
■ Students prepare and conduct a mock trial at the conclusion of the program.

■ Since its implementation, the program has served thousands of students in hundreds of schools throughout Los Angeles County – from the Antelope Valley to Long Beach and from the West San Fernando Valley to the East San Gabriel Valley.

How to get involved

Schools throughout Los Angeles County are invited to participate in the Project L.E.A.D. program. School principals interested in the program should call the District Attorney's Bureau of Crime Prevention & Youth Services at (213) 974-7401.

The program runs from September to June in both traditional and year-round schools. Due to the large number of requests for participation in Project L.E.A.D. and the fact that we are dependent upon volunteers to conduct the program, we are not able to accommodate all schools.



Drawing by a Project L.E.A.D. student for a L.E.A.D. facilitator.

For for more information, call the District Attorney's Bureau of Crime Prevention & Youth Services at: (213) 974-7401 or visit our web site at: www.lacountyda.org